

# **FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

## **DESOLATION FLATS**

### **NATURAL GAS FIELD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

**Prepared for**

**Bureau of Land Management  
Rawlins Field Office  
Rawlins, Wyoming**

**and**

**Bureau of Land Management  
Rock Springs Field Office  
Rock Springs, Wyoming**

**Prepared by**

**This Environmental Analysis was prepared by *Gary Holsan Environmental Planning*, an environmental consulting firm, with the guidance, participation, and independent evaluation of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM, in accordance with Federal regulation 40 CFR 1506.5(a) and (b), is in agreement with the findings of the analysis and approves and takes responsibility for the scope and content of this document.**

**May 2004**



# **Desolation Flats Natural Gas Development Project**

**Carbon County, Wyoming  
Sweetwater County, Wyoming**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

☐ Draft

☒ Final

### **Lead Agency:**

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

### **Cooperating Agencies:**

None

### **Counties That Could Be Directly Affected:**

Carbon County, Wyoming  
Sweetwater County, Wyoming

### **Abstract:**

The Final EIS analyzes a proposal by Marathon Oil Company and other Operators to continue to drill additional development wells in their leased acreage within the Desolation Flats natural gas development area (approximately 233,542 acres) of southcentral Wyoming.

The Desolation Flats project area (DFPA) is located in Carbon County and Sweetwater County, Wyoming. The DFPA is generally located in Townships 13 through 16 North and Ranges 93 through 96 West, 6<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian. Access to the DFPA is provided by WYO 789 from Interstate 80 at Creston Junction south to the intersection with Carbon County Road 608. Access to the interior of the project area is provided by an existing road network developed to service prior and on-going drilling and production activities.

The Proposed Action of drilling approximately 385 natural gas wells at 361 well locations, with a forecasted success rate of 65 percent (250 producing wells) was determined by summarizing drilling plans projected by the Desolation Flats Operators over the next twenty-year planning period. Drilling estimations were based on reasonably foreseeable spacing and drilling projections into areas within the project area where the planned production and development activities would occur. The proposed development is in addition to approximately 89 wells that have been drilled and developed in the project area. The proposed development wells, access roads, pipelines, and other ancillary facilities located on public lands would be permitted with the BLM and the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (WOGCC). Facilities located on privately owned surface would be permitted with the appropriate surface owner. The precise



number of additional wells, locations of the wells, and timing of drilling associated with the proposed natural gas development project would be directed by the success of development drilling and production technology, and economic considerations.

This EIS analyzes the impacts of the Proposed Action, alternatives to the Proposed Action, and the No Action Alternative. The EIS describes the physical, biological, cultural, historic, and socioeconomic resources in and surrounding the project area. The focus for impact analysis was based upon resource issues and concerns identified during public scoping.

Potential impacts of concern from development are to recreation and visual impacts; sage grouse breeding and nesting habitat and populations; special status plant and wildlife species; soil erosion and sediment increases within the project area; impacts to air quality; socioeconomic impacts to Carbon and Sweetwater Counties; and cumulative effects.

**Other Environmental Review or Consultation Requirements:**

This EIS, in compliance with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (as amended), includes the Biological Assessment for the purpose of identifying any endangered or threatened species which are likely to be affected by the proposed action.

**Lead Agency Contact:**

For further information, contact David Simons at the Rawlins Field Office, (307) 328-4328.

Comments on this final EIS should be submitted in writing to :

Bureau of Land Management  
David Simons, Project Coordinator  
P.O. Box 2407  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301

**Date by which comments must be received by the BLM at the above address: 30 days following publication of the EPA Notice of Availability in the Federal Register.**

**Anticipated date of EPA Notice of Availability published in the Federal Register:**

**May 2004** (Refer to the Wyoming BLM website at [www.wy.blm.gov](http://www.wy.blm.gov) to find the actual closing date of the comment period).